

Two Poets of the Peasantry

63

I will tell you, too, the ways of the echoing
deep —
Although small skill is mine in ships or sailing.
For I never sailed in ship the waste of waters
Save to Euboea from Aulis . . .

Here to the northern reader it must be
explained that
to pass the tiny strait from Aulis to Euboea
is about as
adventurous as crossing Woolwich Ferry. Yet
Hesiod,
despite his humour, remains a solitary
figure. We may
take his advice or leave it; he does not ask us
to like him—
what good would that be? He sings to
please himself.
Even his little picture of happiness is a
lonely one.¹⁵
It is summer; between the sweat of harvest
and the sweat
of vintage there comes a brief breathing-
space for men.
Then:

etti TrerpccfT) TE oKif), Kocl Bf(3Xivos oTvoj,
no^ci T' duoAycrfri, y&Aoc T* cclycov a(38wuugvcicdv,
Kod |3o6\$ OXo9<5cyoio Kpfos I^TT00 TSTOKV{T|\$,
irpcoToy6vcov T* Sp^cov* frrrl 8' alOoira *mv£pev
olvov,
lv OKt^ £\$6|JIGVOV, KSKOpTjI^VOV fjTOp £8co5fjs,
dvrfov dxpo^os Ze9\>pou Tp^avra Trp6o-
coTrov,
xp^vris T* devdov Kal drro^Orov, fj T"
<Sc06AcoTOs.

Then give me a great rock's shadow and wine
of Biblis,
Milk-bread, and milk from goats just going
dry,
And flesh of a forest heifer, that has not
calved,
Or a first-born kid's; and shining wine to
drink,
Deep in the shade, with hunger satisfied,
Witt on my face the "West wind blowing free
Across some spring, unfailing, undefiled.

¹⁵Contrast the parallel picture in Theocritus VET, 53-6.

Hi*! not yov n&oiros, |zf| uoi xpfoeta T<5cAavrcc

cnivvojic iiocX' Saopcov, TCCV liiceXdv Is
Not all the realm of Pelops, nor treasure past

appraising,

Nor feet more fleet than wind are anything to me:
Let me sing beneath this boulder, with my arms
about you, gazing
At our flocks together grazing and the sea of
Sicily.